

# SHIPS AND SHIPPING

## SHIPS YARDS IN DUXBURY, MASSACHUSETTS

1<sup>st</sup> yard was owned by (Thomas Prince) about 1720, and was located on the westerly shore of the Nook, at the foot of Captains' Hill. The first vessel was built of Wild Cherry.

2<sup>nd</sup> yard was owned by (Israel Sylvester) on Blue Fish River, at the northwest end of Mill Pond and was later owned by (Samuel Frazer) who built a large number of vessels.

1 was (Hitty Tom) named for an old Indian squaw.

1 was (Hoogly) built for Daniel C. Bacon of Boston.

3<sup>rd</sup> yard was owned by (Benjamin Freeman) at Harden Hill a short distance north of the Nook.

4<sup>th</sup> yard was owned by (Perez Drew) location unknown.

5<sup>th</sup> yard was owned by (Samuel Winsor) and (Samuel Drew) on the shore of the Nook west of Captains' Hill. Samuel Winsor previously built several small vessels on Clark's Island about 1745-1750.

6<sup>th</sup> yard was owned by (Isaac Drew) on west side of the Nook.

7<sup>th</sup> yard was owned by (John Oldham) at Duck Hill near the Marshfield line. Now there is only salt marsh and a few creeks left there.

8<sup>th</sup> yard was owned by (Capt. Samuel Delano) below the mouth of Blue Fish River on the west side.

9<sup>th</sup> yard was owned by (James Soule) between Captains' Hill and the mouth of Jones River in Kingston near the residence of Harrison Lowing. Nearly all of these yards were out of business by 1840.

10<sup>th</sup> yard was owned by (Benjamin Prior) in the S.E. part of the town near the Nook. This yard was occupied in 1764 by (Ezra Weston) and there Samuel Hall built several very large vessels. Because of the size of the vessels built, it was call the "Navy Yard". The ship "Mattakesett" built about 1833 was the largest vessel ever built in New England up to that time. 480 tons. Capt. Briggs Thomas, Commander.

11<sup>th</sup> . In 1834 (Ezra Weston) established his yard on the Blue Fish River and there Samuel Hall and afterwards Samuel Cushman built for his a large number of vessels.

Ezra Weston owned his own sail loft, an extensive rope-walk and made everything to fit his vessels out. He cut his own wood to make the vessels and hauled into the yard with his oxen, as well as in later years sending his ships to bring wood that was not obtainable in Duxbury. Mr. Weston was considered unquestionably the largest ship builder in the United States and was succeeded by his sons Gershom B. and Alden B. The firm was in business 93 years and built a total of 97 vessels. Any vessel with the name Duxbury on it was considered by all countries to be a well-made vessel.

Many of the names are now unknown but we have several of them however, which are as follows: He built:

21 ships: (Hope) was the largest one in New England (880 tons in 1841).

St. Lawrence, Admittance, Vandalia, Eliza Warwick, Oneco (Capt. Drew), Manteo (the last on 1843). 14 other names unknown.

30 brigs: Smyrna was the 1<sup>st</sup> vessel to fly the American flag in the Black Sea. (Capt. Seth Sprague). (Two Friends) was the largest 240 tons. Neptune, Margaret, Ceres, Lavant, Oriole, Messenger, Lion, Federal Eagle and 20 other names unknown.

1 barge: Pallus, 209 tons.

35 schooners: (St. Michael) was the largest 132 tons. Dray, Seadrift, Triton, Virginia, Star was the smallest 20 tons. 29 other names unknown.

10 sloops: Union was the largest 63 tons. Linnett was the smallest 50 tons. Odessa and 7 other names unknown.

From 1800 to 1846 these men had an office at 37039 Commerical St. Boston, Mass.

12<sup>th</sup> . (Levi Sampson) had a yard west of Ezra Westons where he built several small vessels for Boston.

13<sup>th</sup> . (Luther Turner) had a yard east of Ezra Westons where he built several small vessels.

14<sup>th</sup> . (Seth Sprague) had a yard across the street from Duxbury Coal and Lumber Co. where he built several small vessels and launched them across the street. The old Odd Fellows Hall now Sprague Hall was the headhouse of this yard. this Hall formerly set about 300 ft. back from where it now sets. It was moved to its present location by the Odd Fellows and 10 ft. added to its length. This was their hall for about 7 years until they built the present one.

15<sup>th</sup>. (Samuel Hall) had a yard on the east shore of the village just north of the Navy Yard. About 1837-38 he built the ship (Narrangansett) for Mr. Lamb and the ship (Constantine). In 1840 Mr. Hall moved to E. Boston where he was one of the pioneers in the business and remained for many years as a noted ship builder.

16<sup>th</sup>. A short distance north of Mr. Hall's yard was that of Nathaniel and Joshua Cushing where they built the barque (Maid of Orleans).

17<sup>th</sup>. Deacon George Loring owned a yard on the southeast side of the Mill Pond near Blue Fish River Bridge. He built mostly for Charles Binney and his son C.J. F. Binney of Boston. The only names that can be recalled are: Brig, Cynosure; Ship, Grafton; Barque, Binney. The vessels launched in this yard went into the meadows opposite.

18<sup>th</sup>. Sylvanus Drew owned a yard on the north side of Blue Fish River. Capt. Reuben and Mr. Charles his sons succeeded him after his death about 1830. Sylvanus the son of Charles succeeded them. Some of the vessels built by this family were:

Ships: Rambler, Aldebaran, Boreas, Minerva, Chilo, Susan Drew, George Hallett, Kedron, Isaiah Crowell

Brigs: Names unknown.

Barques: Eunomus, Mary Chilton, Hersilia, Kensington.

William Paulding took over this yard in 1849.

19<sup>th</sup>. William Paulding built the following vessels:

11 barques: Bay State, Appleton, J.H. Devoll, Medora, Celestia, E.H. Yarnington, Mystery, Emblem, Andrew Carhey, Jenney Fletcher, Smyrniote

Schooners: Avon, Rainbow, R. Baker, Julian, Olive G. Tower, Gertrude, Mary Allerton, Henry W. Brown, Mary Amanda, Market Fisherman, Gypsy Queen, Daniel Boone, Village Belle, Martha Jane, Willie Lincoln, Grace Lee, Black Swan, Champion, Queen of the Bay, Magellan Cloud and Minnett.

After 18 years he ceased operations in 1867 and named the last vessel for his granddaughter Mary Amanda Bates.

20<sup>th</sup>. N. Porter Keen who had previously work for Mr. Paulding started operations in 1866 in the yard formerly used by Levi Sampson below the bridge on Blue Fish River where he built the last full rigged ship in Duxbury ( Samuel G. Reed), launched in 1869 and commanded by Capt. Henry Otis Winsor (afterwards called the "Fantee"). Other vessels built by him were the Barkentine, Benjamin Dickerman which was 1 year on the stocks. A whaler named "Mary D. Leach". A schooner named "I tell ye". A schooner named "Henry J. Lippett" was the last vessel ever built by him and the largest vessel ever built in Duxbury. When launched she went fully 40 ft. into the marsh on the opposite shore and was called "Keen's Elephant".

21<sup>st</sup>. About 1870 or 1871 John Merritt, Amos Merritt and Warren Standish reopened Mfr. Paulding's yard and built a schooner which was the last vessel ever built in this yard. They then located on the village shore about the location formerly occupied by Samuel Hall and built the schooners "Annie S. Conant" and "Addie R. Warner". The last named was built for Philadelphia parties for fruit trade. She was rigged and fitted ready for use while on the stocks and was lost at sea. The Merritt brothers separated from Mr. Standish and took a new location just south of this one on the land of Calvin Josselyn where they built the barque "Thomas A. Goddard" the last vessel ever built in Duxbury, Mass. Mr. Jake Sprague, a veteran stage driver tells of counting 10 vessels under construction at one time between the Fanny Davenport house and the Blue Fish River in 1838

Nearly every Duxbury-built vessel was manned by Duxbury officers and crew and went to all parts of the world. A great many of these men were born within the sound of the axe and hammer. There was also a yard on King Caesar Rd. owned by Joseph Drew about midway between the wheelhouse of the rope-walk and the Brock's (?) house where Mr. Drew lived. The wheelhouse was pulled down in 1840 and Mr. Alden Chandler built a house on Cove St.

Population of Duxbury, Mass. in 1838 was 2,377. among them were: 40 master mariners, 2 master ship builders, 6 riggers, 1 sail maker, 1 spar maker, 38 ship carpenters, 5 saw mills, 4 wood dealers, 14 stores, 26 carpenters, 11 calkers, 6 painters, 10 masons, 3 boat builders, 2 clam diggers, 2 coal dealers, 7 clergymen, 1 lawyer, 3 expresses, 1 band, 2 undertakers, 1 dentist, 1 doctor, 1 auctioneer, 7 blacksmiths, 72 shoe horse shoers, 2 livery stables, 1 ice dealer, 1 insurance agent, 1 millinery shop, 1 stove dealer, 1 trowel maker, 2 wheelwrights, 2 coffin warehouses, and 1 coroner.

(Page 142) Gazetteer of Mass. By John Hayward, published 1849 by John P. Jewett and Co. , Boston, Mass. Reads:

The people of Duxbury were principally engaged in foreign commerce, ship building, fisheries, and the coasting trade. There is manufacturing in the town of leather boots, shoes, salt, cordage, iron, brass, building stone and lumber. It has a fund of \$24,000 for a private academy and raises \$4,000 annually for public schools. There is an apple tree here noted for its size, age and fruitfulness. It is upwards of a hundred years old. Its fruit in one year has made 10 barrels of cider besides 30 bushels for the cellar. (Page 327)

Population incorporated in 1637.

" in 1790 was 1,454  
" in 1800 was 1,664  
" in 1810 was 2,201  
" in 1820 was 2,400  
" in 1830 was 2,716  
" in 1840 was 2,798  
" in 1865 was 2,377  
  
" in 1643 was 400

Duxbury, Mass. was settled about 1632 by the people of Plymouth, although there were some that stayed summers before that date. The town was incorporated in June 17, 1637. The town received its name out of respect of Myles Standish from Duxbury Hall, the seat of the Standish family in England. Captains' Hill formed a part of the early grant to Capt. Standish who settled near its base. Hobomoh the Christian Indian for 20 years the faithful friend of the colony lived here with Standish. Duxbury, Mass. Furnished during the Rebellion 212 soldiers and 23 sailors. 35 died in the war. There were:

54 in the 4<sup>th</sup> regiment, 55 in the 18<sup>th</sup> regiment, 21 in the 24<sup>th</sup> regiment, 36 in the 38<sup>th</sup> regiment, 69 in all other regiments. 21 reenlistments, and 23 in the Navy. . . The First Church of Duxbury was founded in 1632. The first Pastor was Rev. Ralph Partridge....died 1667. The second Pastor was Rev. John Holmes...died 1675.

Rev. John Robinson was pastor 36 yrs.

Rev. Samuel Veasie was pastor 11 yrs.

Rev. Zedekiah Sanger was pastor 10 yrs.

Rev. Charles Turner was pastor 23 yrs.

Rev. John Allen was pastor 39 yrs. From 1786 to 1825 which time he was colleague with Benjamin Kent. In 1835. Rev. Josiah Moore was settled.

The present church was dedicated Oct. 26, 1840. The Methodist Episcopal church was founded in 1819 and a meeting house erected in 1823. The Wesleyan Methodist Church was founded in 1842 and a meeting house erected in 1844. The Methodist Episcopal Church of West Duxbury was founded in 1831. New meeting house erected in 1868, in West Duxbury. The first Roman Catholic church was erected in 1933.